

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

10/549969

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1. (Currently Amended) A rheological ~~Rheological~~ additive comprising illite clay, smectic clay and an attapulgite, wherein the components illite clay : smectic clay : attapulgite are present in the ratio of 1 to 100 : 1 to 100 : 1 to 100 by weight.

2. (Currently Amended) The rheological ~~Rheological~~ additive according to claim 1, wherein the illite clay has an illite content between 5 and 20 wt.-%.

3. (Currently Amended) The rheological ~~Rheological~~ additive according to claim 1 ~~or 2~~, wherein the smectic clay is bentonite.

4. (Currently Amended) A coating ~~Coating~~ material comprising a rheological additive according to ~~any of claims claim 1 to 3.~~

5. (Currently Amended) The coating ~~Coating~~ material according to claim 4 comprising 0.1 to 10 wt.-% of the illite clay, 0.1 to 10 wt.-% of the smectic clay and 0.1 to 10 wt.-% of the attapulgite.

6. (Currently Amended) The coating ~~Coating~~ material according to claim 5 comprising 0.1 to 3.0 wt.-% of the illite clay, 0.1 to 2.0 wt.-% of the smectic clay and 0.1 to 2.0 wt.-% of the attapulgite.

7. (Currently Amended) The coating ~~Coating~~ material according to ~~any of claims claim 4 to 6~~, furthermore comprising a carrier liquid, wherein the carrier liquid comprises water as the main component.

8. (Cancelled)

9. (Currently Amended) The coating ~~Coating~~ material according to claim 4 ~~any of claims 4 to 8~~, furthermore comprising a refractory material.

10. (Currently Amended) The ~~coating~~ Coating material according to claim 9, wherein the refractory material comprises pyrophyllite, mica and/or zirconium silicate.

11. (Currently Amended) The ~~coating~~ Coating material according to claim 4 ~~any of claims 4 to 10~~, furthermore comprising a binder.

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Currently Amended) The ~~coating~~ Coating material according to claim 4 ~~any of claims 4 to 8~~, furthermore comprising a glass former and a network modifier.

14. (Currently Amended) The ~~coating~~ Coating according to claim 13, wherein the glass former comprises SiO_2 and Al_2O_3 and the network modifier is selected from Na_2O , K_2O , CaO , BaO , Li_2O , MgO , ZnO , PbO and SrO .

15 - 16. (Cancelled)

17. (Currently Amended) A process ~~Process~~ for the production of a coating material according to claim 4 ~~any of claims 4 to 16~~, characterized in that a rheological additive according to ~~any of claims 1 to 3~~ is introduced into a carrier liquid, comprising the steps of

a) providing a rheological additive comprising illite clay, smectic clay and an attapulgite, wherein the components illite clay : smectic clay : attapulgite are present in the ratio of 1 to 100 : 1 to 100 : 1 to 100 by weight, and

b) introducing the rheological additive into a carrier liquid.

18. (Currently Amended) A process ~~Process~~ for coating porous bodies with a coating material comprising the steps:

a) providing a coating material according to claim 4 ~~any of claims 4 to 16~~;

b) applying the coating material to a porous body; and

c) drying the coated porous body.

19. (Currently Amended) The process ~~Process~~ according to claim 18, wherein the porous body is a core or a mold for use in foundry technology.

20. (Currently Amended) The process ~~Process~~ according to claim 18, wherein the porous body is a raw ceramic body.

21. (Currently Amended) The process ~~Process~~ according to claim 18, wherein the porous body is cardboard or paper.

22. (Currently Amended) The process ~~Process~~ according to claim 18 ~~any of claims 18 to 21~~, wherein the material is applied to the porous body by means of a dip coating process.

23. (Currently Amended) A coated ~~Coated~~ porous body onto which a the coating material according to claim 4 ~~any of claims 4 to 16~~ has been applied.

24-28. (Cancelled)

29. (Currently Amended) ~~Use of a rheological additive according to any of claims 1 to 3 for~~ A method of controlling the application characteristics of a coating material for porous bodies, comprising

a) identifying coating material components to be applied to a porous body to impart an intended effect on the porous body;

b) determining the desired rheological properties of a coating material comprising the coating material components of step a) required to achieve predetermined application characteristics of the coating material; and

c) mixing the rheological additive of claim 1 with the coating material components in an amount effective to achieve the desired rheological properties of the coating material as determined in step b).